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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 18. Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 29th meeting, on 21 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 18, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Several delegations expressed the view that due importance should be assigned to the questions of water, population and labour force migration and that subprogramme 18.2 should have a specific reference to population growth and its implications for social services and education. Some delegations also expressed the view that reference should be made to trade.

3. Other delegations stressed the need for coordination with all other institutions pursuing similar objectives in the region, in particular the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

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Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 18 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, taking into account the results of the process of internal restructuring currently under way in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

* Programme 19. Human rights

1. At its 30th meeting, on 21 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 19, Human rights, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. A number of delegations supported the proposed programme of work and believed that it should be implemented immediately given its vital nature. Other delegations felt that the consideration of the programme should be postponed in order to take into account the deliberations of the General Assembly during its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights.

3. Some delegations expressed the view that paragraph 19.1 should be redrafted in order more accurately to reflect the objectives of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Other delegations considered that the text of the paragraph should be replaced only by a reference to the Vienna Declaration and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Some delegations considered that the reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be included in paragraph 19.3 (a). Several delegations felt that the text of paragraph 19.1

should include the provision that the political, historical, social, religious and cultural characteristics of each country, as well as respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, should be borne in mind. Some delegations stressed that the responsibility of the international community to promote effective cooperation for the realization of the right to development and to eliminate obstacles to development should be properly reflected in paragraph 19.1. Other delegations supported the paragraphs as drafted.

4. A number of delegations felt that the 14 objectives indicated in paragraph 19.3 were well-balanced and represented a synergy of efforts. Other delegations considered those objectives to be not balanced, with some being too general and some too specific. Some delegations felt that the 14 objectives indicated in the paragraph seemed more like a strategy and not like objectives to be realized.

5. Some delegations felt that the three subprogrammes represented a more organizational than a programmatic structure. Other delegations felt that the narratives of subprogrammes contained duplication and that the fact-finding activities indicated in subprogramme 19.3 (paragraph 19.9) should be implemented under subprogramme 19.2. Other delegations welcomed the co-location of those activities. Several delegations stressed that the reference to avoidance of overlapping and duplication through effective coordination and continuing adaptation should be made in paragraph 19.9.

6. Some delegations felt that paragraph 19.3 (j), regarding the inclusion of a human rights dimension in United Nations peace-keeping and humanitarian operations, should be deleted, while other delegations supported that objective, emphasizing that it was implied that those activities were implemented only on the basis of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

7. Many delegations felt that there should be a separate subprogramme for the right to development. Other delegations considered that the inclusion of the right to development in subprogramme 19.1 was appropriate and responded accurately to the relevant General Assembly resolution. Some delegations were of the opinion that the obstacles to the right to development and the ways and means to eliminate those obstacles should be described in subprogramme 19.1.

8. Some delegations were of the opinion that a reference to coordination between special rapporteurs and working groups should be included in paragraph 19.3 (f). Other delegations thought that the special procedures should be treated in the document as a whole separate issue since those activities had been of high priority in the previous medium-term plan.

9. Some delegations were of the view that the realization of the right to self-determination should be an important objective for programme 19 on human rights, and recommended that realization of the right to self-determination should be included among the measures listed in paragraph 19.3 (l).

10. Some delegations felt that the development of new norms and new standards and instruments mentioned in paragraphs 19.2 and 19.3 (n) was not an appropriate goal, and that the universal ratification of basic international human rights

treaties mentioned in paragraph 19.3 (a) represented goals which were too ambitious and difficult to be realized during the plan period. Some delegations felt that the list of existing international instruments and standards should be included in the text of the programme. Some delegations considered that effective compliance with existing treaties should also be stressed.

11. The Committee discussed the following proposed amendments.

(a) Create a new subprogramme for the right to development;

(b) Delete paragraphs 19.1 and 19.3 (j) entirely;

(c) Paragraph 19.1: In the last sentence, after the words "the principle", insert the words "and recommendations";

(d) Paragraph 19.2: After the words "to support human rights organs and treaty monitoring bodies", delete the words "to anticipate potential serious violation and react to violations.";

(e) Paragraph 19.3 (a): At the end of the paragraph, after the words "legislation of States", add the following:

"and the continuing adaptation of the United Nations human rights machinery to the current and future needs in the promotion and protection of human **rights, as reflected in the Vienna Declaration**";

(f) Paragraph 19.3 (b): Replace the words "each agency and programme" with the words "each of the United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies whose activities deal with human rights";

(g) Paragraph 19.3 (m): Replace the words "national institutions, grass-roots organizations and civil society" with the words "according to the legislative mandates in effect regarding this issue";

(h) Paragraph 19.5:

(i) After the words "the Declaration on the Right to Development", insert the words "and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action";

(ii) After the words "for the implementation of the right to development", insert the words "as an integral part of the fundamental human rights";

(i) Replace the title of subprogramme 19.2 with the following: "Supporting international procedures and bodies and organs relating to human rights";

(j) In the title of subprogramme 19.3, delete the words "support to human rights fact-finding procedures";

(k) Transfer paragraph 19.9 from subprogramme 19.3 to subprogramme 19.2;

(1) Paragraph 19.9: Delete the words "In the area of support to fact-finding bodies".

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The Committee considered programme 19, Human rights. During the discussion, divergent opinions were expressed on the content and structure of the programme. In that regard, the Committee took note of the programme and recommended that the General Assembly consider the programme, taking into account, inter alia, the views expressed and amendments proposed by Member States as reflected in the above section on the discussion.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 20. Humanitarian assistance

1. At its 32nd meeting, on 24 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 20, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. A number of delegations expressed their support for the activicies of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the general thrust of the proposed programme 20.

3. Several delegations emphasized the importance of coordination of activities of the Department with those of relevant specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian assistance activities in order to avoid overlap and duplication.

4. Some delegations stressed the importance of activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the need to ensure that those activities were not duplicated elsewhere in the Department.

5. Some delegations were of the view that the early warning capacity of the Department should be expanded to cover environmental emergencies, including nuclear-energy-related emergencies.

6. One delegation, which expressed strong support for the Department, also expressed concern that it was incorporating several new activities into its work plan without indicating how they would be financed. The delegation requested clarification of how the following new activities would be funded: (a) development and distribution of teaching materials for mine-awareness education programmes (para. 20.4 (e)); (b) promotion of the development of new technologies for mine-clearance operations (ibid.); (c) development of a strategy and operations plan for system-wide training, to include a training programme for complex emergency coordination staff at the Headquarters and field levels (para. 20.6 (d)); and (d) development of an environmental emergency service (para. 20.12 (c)). The delegation also asked for a clarification of the advocacy role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (para. 20.14 (b)).

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 20 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 21. Protection and assistance to refugees

1. At its 32nd meeting, on 24 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 21, Protection and assistance to refugees, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. A number of delegations expressed their general support for the programme, the general thrust of the proposed medium-term plan and the strong emphasis on improving efficiency, transparency and accountability.

3. Some delegations were of the view that the objective of exploring the development of further measures in order to ensure international protection to all who needed it should be further elaborated.

4. Some delegations expressed the view that the statement in paragraph 21.5 (a) concerning forced population movements should be carefully formulated to ensure that it was consistent with the statements in the legislative mandate.

5. Some delegations considered that the main challenge in providing assistance was development. Broader recovery and development efforts other than quick-impact projects deserved more emphasis. In addition, cooperation of regional agencies and other United Nations agencies should be sought.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 21 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Replace paragraph 21.12 with the following:

"21.12 The final objective of this subprogramme is to help achieve permanent solutions to the problems of refugees. In that regard, UNHCR will promote the elaboration of more comprehensive regional approaches to resolve refugee situations and other forms of involuntary displacement, as appropriate. Of the classical durable solutions to refugee problems, namely, local settlement/integration, resettlement or voluntary repatriation, the preferred solution for UNHCR will be voluntary repatriation under conditions of safety and dignity, while attempts to formulate and implement appropriate regional solutions should be made";

(b) Replace paragraph 21.19 with the following:

"21.19 The final objective of this subprogramme will be that the link between the broader development efforts and the practicability of proposed solutions, such as reintegration assistance in support of voluntary repatriation, should be established and adequately taken into account. In that regard, UNHCR, when elaborating solutions, will work closely with development entities and international financial institutions".

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 22. Palestinian refugees

1. At its 32nd meeting, on 24 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 22, Palestinian refugees, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed their support for this programme and for its implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 22 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 22.1: Replace the last sentence with the following:

"The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will provide emergency relief assistance to the beneficiary

population and respond to requests from the Palestinian Authority, host Governments and the Secretary-General as they arise, commensurate with available resources";

(b) Paragraph 22.5: In the first sentence, replace the words "to the rest of the West Bank" with the words "in the West Bank" and combine the last two sentences to read "UNRWA will continue to maintain the services that it has provided for some 50 years, while preparing for the eventual transfer of its installations, services and programmes to local authorities";

(c) Paragraph 22.6: Add the following sentence between the second and third sentences:

"The Agency will also continue to support human resource development activities, including vocational training and scholarships for higher education for Palestine refugees, commensurate with available resources";

(d) Paragraph 22.8: In the fourth sentence, add the words "where appropriate" after the words "localization of posts".

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 23. Public information

1. At its 33rd and 34th meetings, on 25 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 23, Public information, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Many delegations expressed support for the efforts made to disseminate information through the use of new information technologies. However, some expressed reservations as some countries do not yet have the requisite technology to access that information. They urged the Secretariat to continue dissemination of information through traditional, cost-effective and far-reaching modes of information dissemination, namely, radio broadcasting and print products.

3. Some delegations also expressed concern regarding the use of costly and modern technologies in view of the present budgetary constraints. Several delegations stated that the Secretariat should undertake an evaluation of the role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the information centres in the context of modern communication technologies, while bearing in mind budgetary

constraints. Other delegations suggested identification of priorities in the implementation of mandates with a view to achieving a better balance of available resources. They stressed the need to avoid overlap and duplication in the programme of work of the Department of Public Information.

4. Some delegations expressed support for the United Nations information centres and indicated that they played a crucial role in promoting global awareness about and support for the United Nations. Others indicated that the role of information centres was not adequately covered in the draft programme and felt that advances in modern communication technologies would transform the role of the information centres in certain countries, in some cases making them redundant.

5. A number of delegations indicated that public information activities in all outreach programmes should be conducted in strict compliance with established policy of maintaining full parity of treatment for all official languages of the United Nations.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 23 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 23.1: Add to the penultimate sentence, after the word "internet", the word "CD-ROMs,";

(b) Paragraph 23.7: Replace, in the first sentence, the word "ensure" with "promote a positive image of the United Nations as an effective international organization relevant to the needs of the international community. To reach this goal, it will therefore be important";

(c) Paragraph 23.9: Replace "peace-building" with the words "post-conflict peace-building, development," in the first sentence;

(d) Paragraph 23.15: Replace, in the first sentence, the word "establish" with "consider, in consultation with Member States and relevant intergovernmental bodies, the establishment of", and in the second sentence, replace the word "this" with "such a" and "will" with "could".

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 24. Administrative services

1. At its 31st meeting, on 24 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 24, Administrative services, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Several delegations stressed the importance of the programme because of its impact on the financial resources of the Organization. Accordingly, they believed that the programme narrative should have been more detailed. Other delegations expressed the view that it should not have concentrated on the status quo but rather should have brought into focus the objective of the programme for the next century. They indicated that the narrative should have addressed ways and means of making the Organization more efficient and effective. The view was also expressed that the programme narrative was concise and contained the basic guidelines necessary for the programme. An absence of clear and tightly drawn objectives was noted, as was the absence of benchmarks against which the programme could be judged.

3. Some delegations believed that references to the "financial crises" of the Organization should be deleted since it could not be determined that that would

continue during the plan period. Several delegations stressed the importance of the full, timely and unconditional payment by Member States. They believed that an appeal to that effect should be included in the recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly. Most delegations agreed that the promotion of intergovernmental agreement on measures to overcome the long-standing financial problems of the United Nations, particularly as related to the issue of the scale of assessments, was the prerogative of Member States and not of the Secretariat. Delegations, therefore, believed that such references should be deleted from the programme. Some queried why cash flow items appeared as activities of both subprogramme 24.1, Management services and 24.2, Programme planning, budget and accounts. The Secretariat explained that information on contributions was provided under 24.1 and expenditure data under 24.2.

4. A number of delegations believed that the backbone of any organization was qualified and competent staff and that paramount importance should be given to that issue in subprogramme 24.3, Human resources management. Most delegations regretted the absence in the objectives of the subprogramme of references to staff management relations, ratio of gender, geographical distribution, career development, the national competitive examinations and the advancement of women. Several delegations expressed concern about the deteriorating conditions of service of staff and its consequent effect on morale. The same delegations believed that conditions of service should be viewed more broadly, taking into account career development prospects, stability and the varying degrees of security of tenure. Other delegations stressed the necessity to correct the imbalance between the permanent and fixed-term appointments and promote more broadly the practice of secondment of qualified personnel by States to the United Nations Secretariat.

5. Under subprogramme 24.4, Support services, most delegations noted the absence of any planned upgrading of United Nations facilities under buildings and commercial services. The same delegations stressed the need to include improvement of United Nations facilities as one of the objectives of the subprogramme. One delegation expressed the view that only profitable activities should be maintained as income-producing activities. A number of delegations queried the objectives as regards procurement and transportation. Some delegations, while recognizing that the plan was a picture of the future, noted that the narrative did not describe the current situation. Others expressed the view that the narrative should be future-oriented and clearer objectives for future activities and targets should have been included.

6. Regarding subprogramme 24.5, delegations expressed their views on the need to improve the efficiency, quality and timeliness of conference services. Some delegations emphasized the need to improve the quality of translation and the timeliness of documentation and to enforce the regulations governing documentation, in particular the six-weeks' rule for the distribution of documentation. Reference was also made to the need to limit documentation and make optimum use of conference services. A number of delegations believed that increased reliance on contractual translation was not justified and that any expansion in its use could erode the expertise of the United Nations and the confidentiality of information. Other delegations stressed the importance of

providing conference services to meetings of regional and other bilateral groups and the need for effective enforcement on the length of documentation. Other delegations emphasized the need to respect cost constraints, to develop better cost information and to improve the global planning of conference services.

[6 bis One delegation proposed the addition of a new subprogramme, to be entitled "Internal oversight". Other delegations did not share that position.]

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Committee recommended approval of programme 24 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 24.5: In the second sentence, replace the word "crisis" with the word "situation".

(b) Paragraph 24.6 (a): Replace the subparagraph with the following:

"To facilitate the work of the Committee on Contributions through the provision of technical services;".

(c) Paragraph 24.6 (c): Replace the word "permit" with the word "ensure".

(d) Paragraph 24.8 (a): Replace the words "functioning of an" with the words "functioning of a simplified, yet efficient and".

(e) Paragraph 24.10 (a): At the end of the subparagraph add the following:

"and to improve transparency in the presentation of all accounts of the United Nations to facilitate the deliberations and decision-making of intergovernmental bodies".

(f) Paragraph 24.10 (g): At the end of the subparagraph add the following:

"in accordance with and in full compliance with General Assembly resolutions and decisions".

(g) Paragraph 24.12:

(i) Delete the word "global" throughout the paragraph wherever it appears (24.12, and subparagraphs (a), (c), (d) and (h)) before the word "Secretariat".

(ii) In the first sentence, replace the words "respond dynamically to the needs of Member States" with "carry out its functions efficiently and effectively".

(h) Paragraph 24.12 (a): After the words "management system;" add the following:

"establishment of career development policy in the Secretariat with regard to all types of appointments and with due consideration to adequate balance between permanent and fixed-term appointments; to continue with the practice of secondment of qualified personnel by Member States to the United Nations Secretariat;".

(i) Paragraph 24.12 (c): At the end of the subparagraph, add ", and to continue to hold national competitive examinations as a useful tool to select the best qualified candidates;".

(j) Paragraph 24.12 (g): Replace the subparagraph with the following:

"To implement conditions of service approved by the General Assembly, and to take effective action on work/life issues in order to attract and retain appropriately qualified, high-performing staff;".

(k) Paragraph 24.12 (h):

(i) Between the words "skills" and "enabling", insert the words "including language skills".

(ii) After the words "changing organizational needs" add the words "to deal with emergency situations".

(l) Paragraph 24.12 (i): At the end of the subparagraph, add the words "subject to further consideration by and prior approval of the General Assembly".

(m) Paragraph 24.17: After the word "area" add the words "subject to prior approval of the General Assembly".

(n) Paragraph 24.18: After the words "engineering expertise" add the words "to upgrade these facilities periodically".

(o) Paragraph 24.20: Replace the text of the paragraph with the following:

"The objective in this area is to restructure the procurement and transportation function to provide the Organization with more responsive, expeditious and cost-effective procurement of goods and services for Headquarters, regional offices and field missions and, in this regard, to ensure competitive, fair and transparent process.".

(p) Paragraph 24.21 (b): Delete the subparagraph.

(q) Paragraph 24.21 (c): Replace the text of the subparagraph with the following:

"To develop and maintain a database comprising suppliers from all geographical regions of the world by introducing a simplified and transparent mode of registration as well as procedures for the deletion of outdated information;".

(r) Paragraph 24.21 (d): Replace the words "To seek" with "To diversify the database by seeking continually".

(s) Paragraph 24.21 (e): Replace the text of the subparagraph with the following:

"To develop a computer program to select registered suppliers from all geographical regions to ensure competitiveness, transparency and equity during procurement exercises;".

(t) Paragraph 24.21 (f): After subparagraph 24.21 (e), add the following new subparagraph:

"To improve further upon the methodology for uniform practices and procedures in evaluation of bids and awarding of contracts.".

(u) Paragraph 24.24 (a): At the end of the subparagraph, add the words "with rational allocation and capacity utilization of the existing conference resources".

(v) Paragraph 24.24 (b): At the end of the subparagraph, add the following:

"in particular through regular consultation with committees and bodies at Headquarters and other duty stations to assess their needs and through the development of a cost-accounting system".

(w) Paragraph 24.25:

(i) In the second sentence, add the word "routinely" before the word "developed".

(ii) Replace the words "monitored, and" with the words "provided for both Secretariat and external use (e.g. by intergovernmental bodies).".

(iii) Delete the word "and" after the word "monitored" and begin a new sentence with the words "Technical advice".

(x) Paragraph 24.28 (b): At the end of the subparagraph, add the words "six weeks in advance of all meetings".

(y) Paragraph 24.28 (c): After subparagraph 24.28 (b), add the following new subparagraph:

"To ensure enforcement of regulations concerning documentation.".

(z) [Add a new subprogramme 24.6, Internal oversight, currently programme 25, Internal oversight.]

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 25. Internal oversight

1. At its 32nd meeting, on 24 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 25, Internal oversight, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Many delegations expressed support for the programme. A few delegations noted that no mention was made of an inspection element in subprogramme 25.3, and one delegation inquired about possible overlap of some contents of subprogrammes 25.1 and 25.3.

3. The importance of ensuring the implementation of recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services was emphasized by some. Some delegations also emphasized the need for measurable objectives and outputs.

4. The importance of coordination of the activities by the Office of Internal Oversight Services with the Board of Auditors, the Panel of External Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit was recognized, and the representative of the Office explained how this was being achieved in practice.

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5. It was noted that, consistent with an earlier decision, Internal oversight appeared as a separate programme. Nevertheless, some delegations expressed the view that this programme should not be a separate programme but should become a part of programme 25, Administrative services.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 25, Internal oversight, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 25.14 (c) bis: Add a new subparagraph after paragraph 25.14 (c) reading:

"(d) To undertake timely identification of problems affecting the full, effective and efficient implementation of programmed activities and recommend corrective measures as appropriate";

(b) Paragraph 25.17 (b) (bis): Add a new subparagraph after paragraph 25.17 (b) reading:

"(c) To provide guidance to the Secretary-General on jurisdictional or disciplinary action to be taken following a finding of waste, fraud or mismanagement with respect to the staff and resources of the Organization";

(c) [Transfer the whole of programme 25, Internal oversight, to programme 24, Administrative services, to become subprogramme 24.6, Internal oversight].

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Rapporteur: Mr. Anatoliy T. OLIYNYK (Ukraine)

Outline of the proposed programme budget
for the biennium 1998-1999

1. At its 38th and 40th meetings, on 3 and 4 September 1996, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General containing the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/51/289).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations welcomed the outline as proposed by the Secretary-General. The expressed support for the efforts made to improve efficiency and productivity within the Organization.

3. Many delegations expressed deep concern about the estimates of resources proposed to accommodate the activities during the biennium 1998-1999.

4. Many delegations, while appreciating the efforts to improve efficiency, expressed concern that a proposed reduction was envisaged for international cooperation for development and regional cooperation for development, while political activities and internal oversight showed a proposed increase. Therefore, all mandated programmes and activities for international and regional cooperation for development should receive sufficient resources so as not to disrupt their full implementation.

5. Many delegations, noting the negative growth contained in the outline, indicated the need to implement all the mandates approved by Member States. Other delegations emphasized the need for zero nominal growth budgets for the duration of the financial crisis.

6. Many delegations welcomed the assurances given by the Secretary-General to the effect that the objectives of the programmes included in the proposed medium-term plan could be pursued in 1998-1999 within the overall level of resources included in the proposed outline.

7. Many delegations stressed the importance of payment of assessed contributions in full, on time and without condition.

8. One delegation stated that a specific scheme should be formulated to implement the proposal that savings resulting from improved cost-effectiveness should be reinvested in development programmes.

9. Many delegations emphasized that the outline should be regarded only as a preliminary estimate. One delegation noted that the level of the programme budget for 1998-1999 should not exceed the level of the proposed budget outline.

10. Many delegations stated that the financial projections contained in the outline should in no way constitute a ceiling.

11. Many delegations supported the proposed inclusion of provisions for special missions in the outline. Many delegations expressed the view that provisions should not be made for mandates which had not been approved. Several delegations proposed that consideration be given to having the proposed provision for special missions separate from part II of the budget outline.

12. Many delegations were of the view that the additional provision of $70 million for special missions that had no mandates at present was not in keeping with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986. They further stated that should the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations mandate activities relating to maintenance of international peace and security subsequent to the adoption of the programme budget, there were established procedures and relevant provisions in the Financial Regulations and Rules to meet such expenditures.

13. While supporting the proposed inclusion of a contingency for special missions in the outline, many delegations expressed the view that budgetary provisions could only be made for approved mandates.

14. Some delegations were of the opinion that the proposal to include provision for possible mandates relating to special missions was not in keeping with the budgetary procedure established in resolution 41/213. Some delegations further stressed the need to review the budgetary process approved in that resolution, including the process of decision-making.

15. Some delegations stated that the Secretary-General should provide a clear picture which would facilitate the examination by Member States of the staff reduction. They requested that the Secretariat provide an organigram of each department, accompanied by definitions of the tasks entrusted to each individual unit forming each department, the nationality of the staff whose posts were under suppression and the impact on the principle of equitable geographical representation and quota.

16. Many delegations welcomed the proposal to resort to net budgeting in respect of jointly financed activities. Others advocated that that method also be applied to staff assessment.

17. Some delegations welcomed the proposed level of the contingency fund, while others expressed the view that it might not be adequate.

18. Many delegations expressed the view that the legislative body of the Organization on administrative and budgetary issues had to adopt a decision regarding the proposed savings in the budget for 1996-1997 and the eventual absorption of the new activities.

19. Some delegations underlined the role of the substantive bodies in the United Nations planification and budgetary process. They stressed that the outline had to be considered together with the outcome of the negotiations to be held at the fifty-first session on the level of savings proposed which led the Assembly to appropriate for the biennium $2,608,300,000 instead of $2,712,265,200, representing the expenditure estimates for the approved activities. The outline also had to be considered together with the decision to be adopted by the General Assembly on the possible absorption of additional activities in the programme budget for 1996-1997.

Conclusions and recommendations

20. The Committee examined the outline, using as a framework the four aspects listed in paragraph 1 of the report of the Secretary-General:

(a) The preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities during the biennium;

(b) Priorities, reflecting trends of a broad sectoral nature;

(c) Real growth, positive or negative, compared with the previous budget;

(d) Size of the contingency fund expressed as a percentage of the overall level of resources.

[21. The Committee noted that, compared with the initial appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997, growth for the preliminary estimate was anticipated at minus 6.9 per cent.]

[22. The Committee took note of the priorities proposed by the Secretary-General.]

[23. The Committee took note of the preliminary estimate proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of his report, the breakdown by parts of the budget and the proposed size of the contingency fund, and recommended that the General Assembly give further consideration to all the elements contained in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget outline for 1998-1999, taking into account the views of Member States as reflected in the discussion part of this section.]